

22 A  
T A S T E  
OF THE  
DOCTRINE  
of the newly Erected  
EXERCISE  
A T  
*Thomas-Apostles* London.

Which began on Friday the third of this instant  
December 1652.

MODESTLY PROPOUNDED

To { Caution the Actors.  
      { Counsel the Hearers.

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By a Lover of { Verity  
                    { &  
                    { Unity.

Who cordially desireth that  
Old light in measure may be safe and flourish, Whilst  
New light in matter, may be safe and flourish.

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L O N D O N.

Printed by A.M. for Nathaniel Webb and William Grahame at  
the Sign of the black Bear in Pauls Church-yard near the  
little North-door. 1652.

73-2712

*To the Brethren consenting and combined, for carrying on the Conference, Lecture, Exercise or Meeting, at Thomas Apostles Church London, on Friday evenings, and begun on Friday last the 3<sup>d</sup> of this instant Decemb. 1652.*

Brethren (for so I desire to call and prove you)



Upon publike notice given in print and Palpits, of a Conference to be held by you, and a Lecture to be heard, for the resolving of doubts and cases of conscience, by reconciling of Scriptures that seem to differ: I amongst others (I hope of the people of God) came on Friday last, to the place and at the time appointed, expecting the benefit and comfort of a work of that nature: but (to my great grief and trouble of spirit) was failed in my expectation, not only in the matter propounded and published: finding in stead of conference, the discourses of dissenting men, concerning their own \* sudden rather then serious thoughts, upon a portion of Scripture, no way noting the seeming differences, or speaking the sense of the Spirit of God by way of reconciliation: but also in the effect looked for from M. Rogers, your Pulpit-man and Preacher of the Lecture for that time: for although I must and am ready to confesse, that from the Scripture handled, he spake many profitable truths, yet he started some questions, in cases of conscience to be resolved, which being not to my apprehension fully cleared, have left me in the dark: and the Scriptures (if I may speak it without offence) much to jar and dissent. Being thus failed in expectation, I cannot smoother the same in silence, lest I should do myself, you, and the people of God wrong: I have therefore thought fit, and made bold, in a spirit of necessity, modestly to propound the matters of practice and principle, wherein I stand dissatisfied in the managing of your last Lecture, and so through that dissatisfaction, offended, and jealous, that your Exercise will have some sad influence on the Churches of God, besides particular souls: And I must intreat you not to take offence at this publike manner of proposal. 1. For that it is but fittable to your making publike your Exercise to all the Nati-

\* I shall propound to you such meditations or thoughts as I have had on this Scripture since I came into this place: was the face of your Speaker: therefore I call them sudden.

on, even in Print, as if you intended the sun to see all the trans-  
 actions of your Exercise. 2. For that the thing is of publick con-  
 cernment; the vindicating and clearing, or censuring and con-  
 demning of certain publique Principles and Practices of the  
 Church of God, retained many years: the deceiving or undecei-  
 ving of that multitude of people, from all quarters of the City, at  
 the same time and place subjected to your doctrine. 3. But es-  
 pecially, as being thereunto compelled by your selves; in that  
 after a proclaimed conference had brought together many of  
 doubtfull mindes, and different judgements, expecting the liberty  
 of propounding and receiving answer, you publickly denied it,  
 being challenged; and declared an incapacity of speaking against  
 or to any thing asserted, unlesse a man would first declare himself  
 a member of some of your selected and separate Congregated  
 Churches; the which put a gag in my mouth, and silenced my  
 tongue, though my heart swelled, and was often ready to vent,  
 had not want of candlelight, with willingnesse to countenance  
 order (though irregular) and so free my self from the charge  
 of violence (which I could wish you were not so apt to charge  
 on such as object against what is by you asserted) commanded my  
 present compliance, and so communication of my thoughts by  
 this way; whereby I shall now briefly propound what I might  
 have objected, and leave them to your discretions to clear up or  
 vindicate to the people of God, that shall hereafter wait upon your  
 Exercise.

The first offence that presented it self is, in respect of practice;  
*viz.* Your setting up men of private places and particular callings,  
 whose education and want of intention to the work of the Mini-  
 stry (untill of late years) must needs bespeak want of qualifica-  
 tion to so great a work, whilst they unacquainted with the origi-  
 nals of the Scripture (which are emphaticall) must needs see  
 dark and obscure places, but by the light of our Translation, which  
 you must needs confesse to be but a thick and dimme *medium* to  
 the end of reconciling Scripture; though clear to shew truths  
 tending to the *esse*, and many things to the *benefesse* of the soul; to  
 common capacities; or if they have qualification, I fear either  
 received not, or renounce Ordination; and so, though able, come  
 to speak without the Authority of the Lord Jesus (which M. Ro-  
 gers declared essentiall to a Minister.)

Secondly, In respect of doctrine: I shall principally note to  
 You

you my dissatisfactions in some things asserted by M. Rogers; though the foregoing speakers were very obscure, and provoked an enquiry in my spirit concerning what they spake. Yet I shall referre it to its proper place in his Sermon, where he spake more expressly to it.

Mr. Rogers speaking from *Luke 14.23.* *And the Lord said unto the servant; Go out into the high waies and hedges, and compel them to come in that my house may be filled.* Having spoken in generall, and resolved the words into a generall Proposition, speaking to the several particular Observations therein, spake first of the servant in the Text, and resolved

*That such as go to call sinners unto Christ, must not be only and barely subjects, but Servants and Ministers by vertue of Office.*

Which he noted was to be *Divini* by qualification, and *Ecclia* prelate, by authority of Office. And having propounded it as a case of Conscience to be resolved, how they received this authority? and answering in generall, From God, by holy unction of the Spirit, left us in the dark concerning the manner of giving the same, whether visibly and immediatly, as in the Apostolike daies; or invisibly and mediately, as in and by the Ordinances. Then particularly from the Church, which he said was the election and choosing of the people, saying expressly, that Ordination (of long retained in the Church, as that which did *ratifica* denominare and authorize a Minister,) was nothing, nor worth disputing, nor time to speak of: To which assertion, as I could not heretofore assent, so his answer being little more then his own assertion of it, did not reach the conscience; and the Scriptures urged by him to place the authority of a Minister in the election of the particular (for I cannot imagin he meant the universall) Church, (as to my present thoughts) were so far from reconciliation with other Scriptures, that according to his sense, they jar in themselves: as that in *Acts 6.3.* Choose you *men full of the holy Ghost*: is so far from proving their election to be the inauguration into their Office, that it seems to be but the preface to the work: for if they had been by vertue of that, and the Church had the power to create them, why is it in the same verse said, *whom we may ordain or appoint*? and in verse 6. *they set them before the Apostles*: nay, and the Apostles by prayer and imposition of hands did install them into their Office.

By this text the holy Ghost seems (to me) to shew; that, as in  
Offices



Offices politickall, election and inauguration are distinct: that the Lord Maior elect, is not (*ipso facto*) Lord Maior, till he be installed at *Westminster*: so is it in Offices Ecclesiasticall, the Pastors elect are not (*ipso facto*) Gospel-Ministers, untill set before Ministers, prayed for, and set apart by laying on of hands. But further to back this Scripture, and shew harmony; he seconds it with *Acts 14.23.* And when they had ordained them Elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, &c. Whence he inferred, that the Church of *Antioch* ordained them: and told us, they did it with a *χεροτομία*, elevatione manus, with a holding up of the hand, as a token of their election; not with a *χεροτονία*, laying hands on them: to which, when I remembered that some of the Learned had confounded these termes, my spirit could not relish the contradiction of them: yet looking for M. Rogers to reconcile (according to the end of his Lecture) this with other Scriptures, I was failed therein, and therefore should have desired him to tell us whether we are befooled in our Translations, when we reade, *By the laying on of hands*, and it should be *By holding up of the hands*: And whether a *χεροτονία*, be not found in the Apostolicall Ordination, as in *Acts 6.6.* *1 Tim. 4.14.* *5.22.* which our Translation reads, *Laid on hands*, and I beleieve the Original will bear it. I see then little reconciliation between these and M. Rogers sense.

But besides this difference of Scriptures one with another, I humbly conceive M. Rogers differed from the true sense and scope of the Text it self, when he affirmed, that the Church of *Antioch* ordained themselves Elders; for it is clear to me, that they that did ordain, ordained for others, and not themselves; for saith the Text, They did it in every Church; was any more Churches then one at that time in *Antioch*? and if there were, which was the Church that created Elders for other Churches by holding up their hands? Nay it is clear (in my judgement) that these that did ordain, did it as well at *Lystra* and *Iconium*, as *Antioch*; and he that will reade the foregoing verses, and observe the connexion, cannot but see it: Nay moreover, those that did ordain, had one of them been stoned at *Lystra*; and both of them went about preaching and confirming the Disciples, and this I hope you will not say was the hand-holding-up Church, but *Paul* and *Barnabas*. Moreover, when I observe this ordaining Elders to be accompanied with fasting and prayer, it agrees with the manner of other Ordina-

ἐν παντί τοῖς  
ἐκκλησίαις.  
ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἑσπέραις  
ἐκκλησίαις.

Ordinations by the Apostles, and argues something essential to the constitution of a Minister besides Election; and if Election were sufficient at *Antioch*, it sounds harsh in my ears that the Church at *Jerusalem* must present their elect Officers for Ordination before the preaching Apostles; and that *Titus* must be left at *Creet* to ordain Elders in every City; which had been a groundlesse variance, and needlesse Commission, if election of the Church had done it.

The second thing which (by the darknesse of its discovery) disquieted my thoughts, was this: After the generall advancement of free-grace, without any notes concerning the way of its operation in a poor soul, by the speakers, M. Rogers in his third observation (as I remember) concerning the parties called, *viz.* they that were in the high-ways and under the hedges, observed, Most miserable and sinfull souls, drunkards, adulterers, (wearers, and in the act of the vilest sin, were to come to Christ, And thence propounded this case of conscience, Whether a poor souls mourning for sin, humiliation, and discharge of good duties, were not, or might not be an argument of comfort to his soul? The which he answered in the negative, That they might not, without any distinction; declaring in very generall terms all our sanctification and humiliation were not worth a tear, and a tear was worth nothing; Now although I could assent to this, in respect of being the objects of a faith of adherence and justifying, whereby the sinfull soul is upon sense of an undone estate to call it self on Christ and Christ only, as on the rock on which it may and must be safe: yet the reflections of that free grace (that carrieth out the soul to adherence on Christ) in sorrow for sin, subjection to Christ in Ordinances, sanctified life, and the like, I conceive to be arguments of the faith of assurance: and so of a-bundant comfort to a believing and dejected soul: and hence the spirit of holinesse is called in its sanctified operations on the heart, *Rom. 8. 23.* *Eph. 1. 13, 14.* in-fruits, seal, earnest; being the evidence of our interest in Christ: and hence also we are exhorted in the Gospel to prove our selves by mortification of sin, and sanctification of soul, whether Christ be in us, which is the foundation of our sensible comfort; this kinde of argument I cannot but observe the Apostles to suggest, as *2 Pet. 1. 1.* *add to faith verue, to verue temperance,* *2 Pet. 1. 5.* &c. that you may make your calling and election sure: and in *1 Jo. 2. 3, 4, 5, 6.* *Hereby we know that we know him, and that he is in us,*

22. 6. 1715.

*if we keep his Commandements, and walk as he Walked:* Besides the force of this Apostolical direction, the Apostle Paul by his own example doth dictate unto Christians the liberty of rejoycing (as I may not say triumphing) in their sanctified conversation, in 2 Cor. 1. 12. *This is our boasting, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation.* And a Tim. 4. 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my Course; I have kept the Faith:* &c. so that had M. Rogers distinguished between faith of adherence as to justification before God; and faith of assurance as to the consolation of drooping and doubting souls, Scripture had agreed: but whilst in generall terms he decried all comfort of those sweet reflections of grace, and that in resolution to a case of conscience; it stirred up in my spirit a jealousy and suspicion, that whilst he would keep us off the rock of Popish merit, he should hazard our peace upon the Antinomian licentiousness and remissness unto pious duties.

The third and last thing, which was not the least dissatisfying and offensive to my spirit, was under that observation of M. Rogers concerning the men in the waies and hedges, and the house into which they were called: where I must be bold to tell you that I conceive M. Rogers did wring the nose of the Parable, and step out of the way into the waies and hedges, when he applied that quality to Christians whereby the holy Ghost set out the estate of the Gentiles and Pagans, and to make that the Feast the Lords Supper (or as he said; to call it more properly, breaking of bread, though I know no reason so much to appropriate that denomination) which is to hold out the whole work of the Gospel whether in Word or Sacraments with the comforting effects thereof; but more especially to declare the house of this Feast to be your Churches in a separate and congregated way, as he in generall with a great heat of affection, (to avoid bitterness, not to say passion, though more proper I fear) held forth and endeavoured to instill into us, calling with violence into it, and affirming all of us out of it to be in the high-waies and hedges, and so could not have the Lords Supper or breaking of bread. Had he only spoken of the unbelieving Pagans the Gentiles (that are without doubt meant in the Parable, though it was never so exprest by your speakers or Pulpit-man) coming into the Church of God in generall, without a limitation thereof to this and that subject, I had assented and



concluded *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* : but in that he did limit it, I cannot but dissent and tell you, that I apprehend much violence, and \* uncharitableness in you, not only towards the Churches of God in *England* which you have owned, and where you were called many of you to Christ, if you have ever known him, but also to other Christian Churches not in your way : but lest you should think I mistook his Limitation, and apprehend amiss, I humbly offer these reasons for my apprehension of him : and submit them to any competent and ingenuous Judge.

\* Were it charity for a child in your way to say of his godly parent, that he were in the waies and hedges because out of your way.

1. All were declared as incapable of speaking, in your Exercise, that did not declare themselves members of some such Church : which argues what Church he was to call unto.

2. He spake to members of the visible Church of Jesus Christ, and yet by way of distinction, calling some out of the high-waies and the hedges, into the house, to communicate in breaking bread ; I cannot imagine he called into the Church invisible, for that giveth not a capacity of the Lords Supper or breaking of bread, who then but your Assemblies can be understood by this house, into which the members of the visible Church as heathen not yet in the faith are called.

3. He all along held out his house by this Epethite, *our fellowship*, saying, we come to call, we cannot bring this Feast out, come to us, joy in our way ; all which are terms of propriety and speciality : and do we not know, that you that are actors in that exercise, are and have declared your selves to be of such congregated separate Churches.

4. In answering the objection that he started, that many godly men and beleivers were not of your mind, and your way, and could not joyn in your fellowships, and yet desired the Lords Supper, did he not clearly appropriate the wedding Feast to your Assemblies, and there limit it by way of allusion, calling in, all that would enjoy it, declaring notwithstanding such desire, they were in the hedges and high-waies, and that such Ministers as gave this Ordinance not in your way, carried it out of the house, and those that received with them rejected this Feast, for not coming into your way which he would suggest to be the house of God.

I leave it now to your selves ingeniously to determine whether although he did not speak it in expresse terms *in idem verbo* yet by these arguments any ingenious man may not see object that he pointed at to be separate and congregated

church yard,

Door of truth  
opened.

semblies, and so seems not your design to be to propagate that principle, viz. that there is such a necessity of entering into a Church-way (that is of Independency) that there is no expectation of salvation without it: Will not this conclusion naturally flow from these premises? You are in the waies and hedges in plain English, according to the scope of the Parable, Gentiles; that ye know not Christ: We dare not, our Commission allows it not to bring this Feast to you, for we bring it out of the house: if you come not into us you reject Christ: all which with many such like were his common zealous expressions.

1 Cor. 5.

Yet before I can assent to such assertions, I must see how your reconciling Lecture will reconcile your principle, and the Scripture; though Scripture do require the purging of pollutions out of the Churches corrupt, where doth it denominate the corrupted Pagans, and bid the pure *Corinthians* go to his house at *Galatia*, *Ephesus*, *Philippi*, or the like; and that especially when the Church is with a spirit of zeal purging themselves of all pollutions: what Scripture doth warrant collection of Churches out of Churches, whilst such: or what Scripture doth evidence the Church of God in *England* to be annihilated and run to the high-waies and hedges again: what Scripture doth warrant private mens constitution of Churches without the authority of publique Ministry: in a word, what Scripture doth denominate you to be the house of this great King, exclusively, shutting all other Congregations from this priviledge, and so enjoying the Wedding Feast: I pray you (Brethren) consider these things well, and see whether you give not cause of fear? whether your zeal be according to knowledge? Whether (whilst you are apt to cry out of violence, bitterness, and censuring, when justly reprov'd for your erroneous practices and principles) you do not detect an exceeding censorious, and uncharitable spirit, much below your meeke expressions: when you do ministerially and in the name of the Lord declare, and damne to the very pit of hell such and those multitudes of men and women, which your selves will singly own as beleivers in covenant with God, saying, this is a godly man, and that is a good woman, but-- and that only because they come not to your way and fellowship, although it hath many years since been desired, and a long time expected, that your standing principles that should guide your constant practice might be exhibited that they might be tried, but or did not to this day be obtained.

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Thus

Thus (Brethren) I have modestly propounded the dissatisfaction of my Spirit in the first act of your exercise, and shall desire it may be received by you, as tendered by me, in a spirit of meekness, and that the truth clouded in the first, may be cleared in the succeeding Exercises: and Scriptures wronged may be righted, people of God harshly though unjustly censured may be vindicated; lest you lie under that character of seducers, by making Scriptures differ: whilst you pretend to make them agree, and judging others whilst your selves would be judged of none; I leave these lines to you with these declared ends, that it may cautionate you what doctrines you divulge, and principles you suggest, to such as I hope will try them: I must tell you that pretences of piety, and professions of unity have in the Church of God been observed to be the *Prologomena* of schisme and separations: that preaching of some golden truths interlined with errors, because not fundamental, less regarded by common audience to be the *preludium* and shoeing-horn of more horrid heresie: I pray you take heed whilst you proclaim your selves to be guides of others, that you look not on the truths and people of God with jaundiced eyes, or through the coloured glasse of a prejudicate opinion.

To the people of God I propound these as counsell, to take heed whom and what they hear, lest they be taken at unawares; I wish they may remember, *All is not gold that glisters*. And that the devil may seduce by appearing as an Angel of light.

As for my self, I doubt not to finde the comfort of this discharged duty, though derided by some for it; and if you enquire and wonder my Name is not subscribed, I desire you to observe the reasons to be these: My person is not known to most if any of you if my Name were written: and it may be the name might provoke prejudice against the thing proposed: It is sufficient to you, that dissatisfaction is signified, especially where the matter is not personall but publique to the Church of God, though among the vast multitude of your hearers you know not the man: this I shall profess my self to be, one resolved to supplicate the Throne of grace, that a successive Gospel-Ministry may be continued in the Churches of God in this Nation; to be ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery; that the Candlestick and lights thereof may never fall, which it will do if the cord of Ordination be sed: as also that beleiving souls may rejoyce in, and be comforted in Church yard, by the reflexions of free-grace by a sanctifying spirit, and the

be preserved, and that measure of unity that is among any the  
 wants of God be continued, untill you sensible of the sad effects  
 dividing principles and separating practices, cry unfeignedly to  
 Lord Jesus: *Show us O thou whom our soul loveth, where  
 feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest, for why should we  
 abide by the flock of thy companions.*

Cap. 1. 7.

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